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Private Lands Program Mission

A program designed to
create, improve, and protect
wildlife habitat and other
natural resources on
Iowa's private lands.

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Private Lands Program

Rotating Editor, Chad Paup

Habitat Check-off Program

Private landowners, agencies or companies preparing to purchase native grass and forb seed from participating seed dealers should request to be enrolled in the Habitat Check-off by attaching the **"HABITAT CHECK-OFF CERTIFICATE"** with their order to any of the six participating Iowa Native Seed Producers. There is no cost to the landowner to participate in Habitat Check-off.

When a participating seed grower receives an order with a habitat check-off certificate the dealer deposits 10 percent of the total purchase into the Habitat Check-off Fund. This fund is shared 50-50 between the IDNR and PF.

The IDNR will use their portion of the fund to provide in-kind cost-share to private landowners, County Conservation Boards, Iowa cities and towns, and other landowners. Landowners wishing to improve wildlife habitat on their land by planting prairie will be able to enroll into a habitat agreement with the IDNR.

The landowner should contact their local IDNR private lands staff for a wildlife habitat improvement plan. The landowners will then receive a seed voucher redeemable at any of the participating dealers. The landowner will be required to match the value of the voucher they receive from IDNR with seed they purchase from a seed dealer. Seed purchased from one of the six participating Iowa Native Seed Producers will help perpetrate the Habitat Check-off Program and therefore, future habitat projects.

IDNR Receives Grant to Restore Endangered Species Habitat

Kelly Smith

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has received a Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The purpose of this grant is to protect, enhance and restore threatened and endangered species habitat. In Iowa there are 13 federally listed threatened and endangered species. There are also 2 species that are candidates to be put on the federal list. Iowa also has 238 state listed species.

LIP is a two-tiered grant. The first tier will focus on information and education. Through this portion of the grant the Iowa DNR is creating a species-at-risk habitat protection plan. The DNR will be using this plan to instruct private landowners, government and non-government organizations in regards to the species-at-risks' needs and practice procedures. It is important to the Iowa DNR that everyone working on habitat improvements has the most up to date information on the rarest of Iowa's species. This information will be available to all interested Iowans through the DNR website. Also, DNR staff members will be

working with private landowners to create wildlife habitat improvement plans for threatened and endangered species.

The second tier of LIP is a cost-share program for private landowners to implement the plans the DNR staff members create in the tier 1 portion of the grant. In order to see the greatest positive effect on threatened and endangered species populations the DNR decided focus the funds in priority areas. Each priority area was chosen for its unique qualities and the potential to increase population sizes of the species found there. Seven priority areas have been designated throughout the state.

Lotts Creek, Riley, Athens, and Monroe townships in Ringgold County are a priority area. This area is important for large tracts of open grassland. One reason this area is unique is because both the Missouri and Iowa Chapters of The Nature Conservancy and the Missouri Department of Conservation are also working toward the same goals in the area.

Dickinson County is another priority area. This area has some extremely rare bird species dependent upon grassland and wetland complexes. There are also a number of butterfly and plant species in this area.

Van Buren County around the Shimek State Forest has been selected for its importance to woodland T&E species. This is one of the richest areas of rare woodland species in Iowa.

Louisa and Muscatine Counties' Mississippi Alluvial Plain is the area in the state that has the highest herptiles richness in the state. This area has both state and federally listed species. This area is important due to its unique habitat types. It is an area of sand prairies and swamp white oak savannas unlike any other found in the state.

Bremer County along the Wapsipinicon River corridor has been selected because it harbors the largest and most viable population of Eastern Massasauga in the state. This is a federal candidate species and a state endangered species.

Winneshiek, Allamakee, and Clayton Counties have the majority of the Algific talus slopes in Iowa. These slopes create the perfect habitat for one federally endangered animal, on federally threatened plant and countless state listed species. These species are considered Ice Age relics. They hold on in Iowa and a few populations in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Without these slopes these species would become extinct.

Prairies with western prairie fringed orchid and mead's milkweed have also been selected for a funding priority. These two plants are the most readily declining plant species in Iowa.

The DNR will be hosting meetings in each of these priority areas to educate local landowners on the ecological concerns and options for funding.

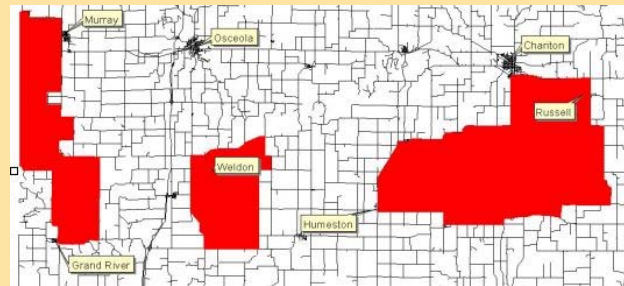
Landowners interested in attending one of these meetings can find information on the DNR website www.iowadnr.com from there go to the wildlife page and then to the Landowner Incentive Program link. Information can also be obtained by calling Kelly Smith, LIP Coordinator at (515) 281-6247 or emailing her at Kelly.smith@dnr.state.ia.us.

Second Year of Pheasant/Quail Restoration Program is Underway

Helga McDaniel

The IDNR Pheasant/Quail Restoration Program is assisting 90 landowners manage their CRP contract acres for upland game birds. These participating landowners own property in Clarke, Decatur, Lucas and Wayne Counties.

The targeted areas are illustrated in the map below.



Several conservation practices are being performed on these CRP tracts. These include establishment of blocks of native grasses, food plots, strip disking/strip spraying, legume interseeding, edge feathering and burning. The enhancements costs are paid at 100%.

In spring 2003, approximately 1150 acres of warm season grass, 500 acres of legume interseeding and 450 acres of food plots were planted.

The second year of the program looks at establishing an additional 450 acres of warm season grass, 300 acres of disking and 150 acres of food plots. Approximately 50 private contractors are being utilized to complete these habitat enhancements.

Kudos,

Taken from email:

Josh, Just passing along kudos to you and the "Private lands" program. I had the opportunity to meet and hunt with Ed McIntosh on his property this past weekend. It has been many years since I have seen the numbers of pheasants as I witnessed on that day.

Super habitat "edge" with more in the plan for the future, as Ed described it. He was very proud to show off his area and what has been done with your guidance and program efforts. Keep up the good work.

Steve Dermand

Private Lands News

Adams County PF offers Legume Mix

Many of us witnessed numerous acres of CRP being mowed and baled after it was released last summer.

The PF committee in Adams County is offering a free mix to bolster nesting habitat for five of those acres per landowner.

The mix includes:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.25 lb. Alfalfa | 6.50 lbs. Korean Lespedeza |
| 2.25 lbs. Red Clover | 1.75 lbs. Alsike Clover |

This mix is bumped 50% in order to broadcast. Cost to PF will average \$18.50 per 5 acre.

From Area 1 Northwest Iowa

Kathy Koskovich

There are a lot of good things going on with private landowners here in Area 1!

LIP

Maury and I are currently working on the upcoming LIP Landowner Workshop to be held in Spirit Lake, IA (Feb. 17th). We have a list of Dickinson Co landowners interested in this new program and hope for a good turnout at the Workshop!

New Position Filled!

Bruce Sprague began working last fall as the Wildlife Specialist in Monona and Harrison counties (he took Nathaniel Umphrey's position). He is getting to know the local landowners, as well as other agency staff and NGO contacts for the area. Bruce works with landowners in the Loess Hills, as well as in the Missouri River Floodplain. He is active in the Loess Hills Alliance Stewardship Committee. Welcome Bruce! Bruce can be contacted at:
712-644-2210 Logan
712-423-2624 Onawa

Sharpies!

Woodbury Co NRCS staff submitted the Sharp-tailed Grouse Area as a Proposed WHIP Special Project Area. This area is located in eastern

Woodbury County, and includes approximately 8500 acres, of which 4900 acres are in either CRP or pasture/hay land acres. We are hoping for this proposal to come through! This area has also gained Conservation Priority Area status for the next CRP signup this coming spring! Landowner Workshops are being scheduled in February to assist landowners within the Project Area. Ed Weiner, Pat Schlarbaum and I are actively involved with this project as well! There is a great network of neighbors in this area who are very enthusiastic about promoting the "sharpies." The Woodbury County Conservation Board agreed to provide an area on their Oak Ridge Area for a mowed "lek" site. Mowing of the lek occurred last fall in anticipation of spring mating by the Sharp-tails. The Oak Ridge Area is within a few miles of the other leks located on private land. Roger Hill, wildlife photographer, has been photographing the "sharpies" from several of the lek sites. We are looking forward to seeing their mating activity this spring!

WHIP in the Loess Hills

WHIP applications in counties within the Loess Hills were approved by late summer this past year. Several landowners in the Grant Center area in Monona

County were approved for grassland management of native prairie remnants (prescribe fire and brush management). Also, another group of landowners in Woodbury County located near the Luton Area in the Loess Hills were approved! These landowners are all adjacent to one another, which will certainly provide for some landscape scale management for native prairie restoration efforts!

Floyd River Fish Restoration Project

This Project has been going on about two years. Fish Kill Restitution money was given to Sioux and Plymouth Counties (through ESD and IDALS) to be used for filter and riparian buffers along the Floyd River. A liquid fertilizer spill Jan 7th, 2002 affected about 56 miles of the Floyd, killing a total of 1,034,843 fish! The two counties received a total of \$150,000, which was paid over a 2-year period. A cooperative position was created for a person to work on signing up landowners for filters and buffers. All the money has been obligated to date. As of last fall, a total of 504.4 acres of filter strips and 187.6 acres of riparian buffers were enrolled in this Floyd River Project!

CRP-26TH Sign-up: How Iowa Turned Out

Kevin Andersen

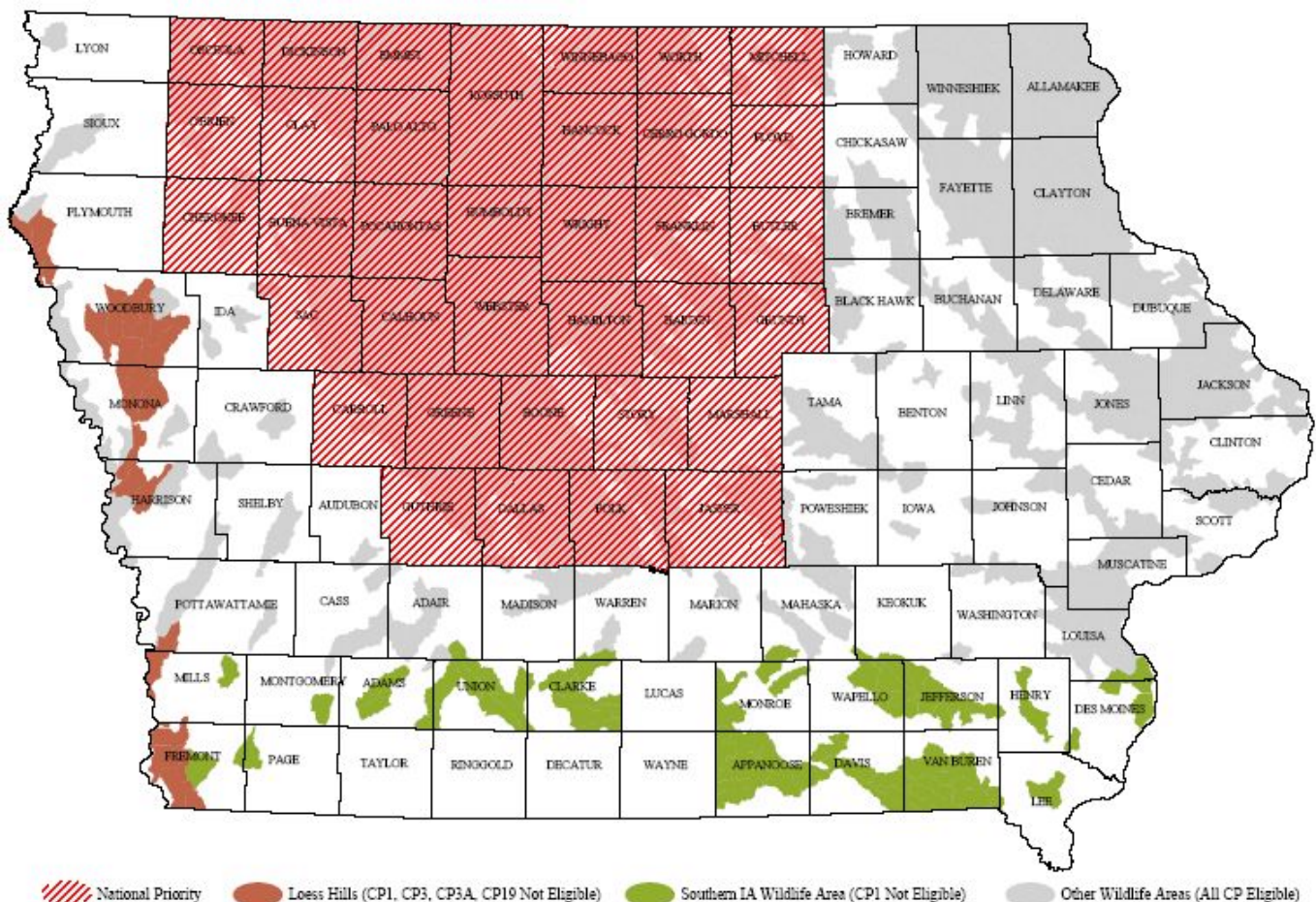
The latest general CRP sign-up was held in Iowa last May and early June, with the Iowa DNR assisting the Farm Service Agency with technical advice to farmers and landowners. Iowa had 127,645 acres accepted, but 166,395 expired for a net loss of 38,750 or 60 square miles of grasslands converted back to cropland.

Iowa had several priority areas, according to watersheds that could benefit most from additional CRP acres. Acceptance in these areas was generally higher than in non-priority areas. Also, landowners who chose CP-2, CP-4D, or CP-25 (more diverse native grasses/forbs and shrubs) tended to have a higher acceptance rate than less diverse plantings.

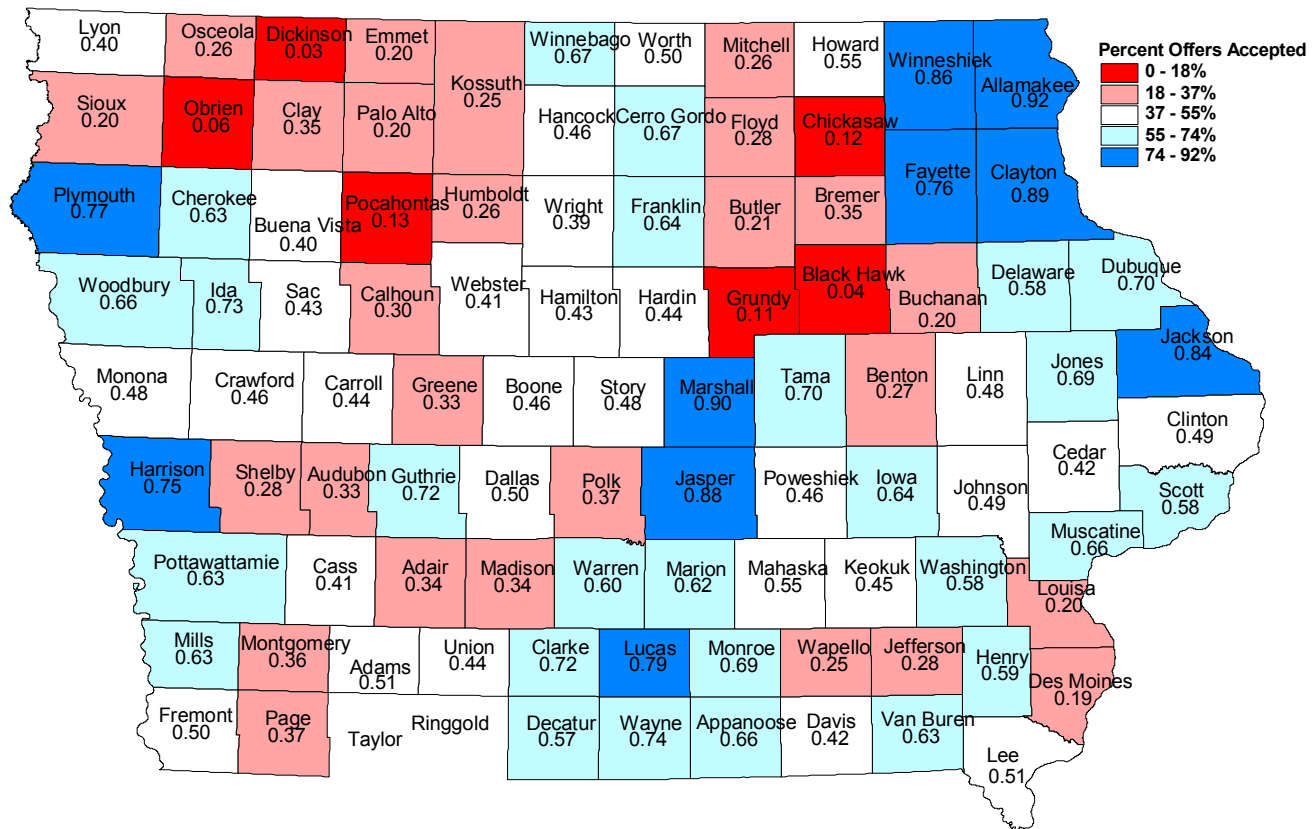
One area that will always hurt Iowa landowners in the

general CRP sign-up will be soil rental rates. Iowa has one of the best soil in the nation, which generally makes it tougher for us to compete with states with less productive soils. One way Iowa landowners can be more competitive is to do more of the more diverse plantings of native grasses/forbs and/or tree plantings. Working with a biologist or habitat specialist during the sign-up period will also increase landowner odds of being accepted.

2004 CRP Conservation Priority Area Map



ACCEPTANCE RATE OF CRP CONTRACTS BY COUNTY FOR 26TH CRP SIGN-UP



Map shows % (offers received in county / offers accepted in county) of offers accepted by county for 26th CRP sign-up. Taylor and Ringgold counties were at their 25% CRP cap.

Where Do Iowa Hunters Hunt? Public or Private Lands?

Participation in Wildlife Associated Recreation in Iowa 2001 from
USFWS 2001 National Survey.

| | Hunters | % of Hunters | Days Hunted | % of days |
|--------------|---------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Public Land | 92,000 | 38% | 1,232,000 | 31% |
| Private Land | 207,000 | 85% | 3,055,000 | 77% |

(Totals do not agree w/other totals for hunters and percentages do not add to 100% because some hunters hunted on both.)

CRP 26 SIGNUP
ACRES ENROLLED IN TREE PRACTICES (CP3, CP3A, CP11)

